Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1   Claim 1 (currently amended): Method for measuring a
2   talking quality of a communication link in a
3   communications network, the method comprising:
4   _____a main step of subjecting a degraded speech signal
5   s'(t) with respect to a reference speech signal s(t) to an
6   objective measurement technique (32) for measuring a
7   perceptual quality of speech signals, and producing a
8   quality signal q which represents an estimated value
9   concerning the talking quality degradation;
10  _____the degraded speech signal comprising a returned
11  signal r(t);
12  in which the objective measurement technique comprises a
13  step of modelling masking effects in consequence of noise
14  present in the returned signal comprising the
15  determination of a threshold noise level, by determining a
16  local minimum value of the degraded speech signal s'(t).

1   Claim 2 (original): Method according to claim 1, in which
2   the reference speech signal s(t) comprises a silence
3   period and the threshold noise level is determined in the
4   part of the degraded speech signal s'(t) corresponding to
5   the silence period in the reference speech signal s(t).

Claim 3 (original): Method according to claim 2, in which
the silence period is provided at the start of the
reference speech signal s(t).

Claim 4 (original): Method according to claim 3, in which
the silence period has a duration of at least 0.5 sec,
more preferably at least 0.9 sec.

Claim 5 (original): Method according to claim 1, in which
the threshold noise level is estimated as local minimum
values of successive parts of the degraded speech
signal s'(t).

Claim 6 (original): Method according to claim 1, in which
the threshold noise level is estimated as the local
minimum value of the degraded speech signal s'(t) in a
predefined value range.

Claim 7 (currently amended): Method according to ~~one of~~
~~the proceeding claims~~claim 1, in which the main step
comprises:
        ———a first processing step of processing the
degraded speech signal s'(t) and generating a first
representation signal R'(t,f) ̲;̶
        ———a second processing step of processing the
reference speech signal s(t) and generating a second
representation signal R(t,f) ̲;̶
        ———a step of subtracting (32a) the first
representation signal from the second representation
signal as to produce a difference signal D(t,f) ̲;̶

13  ——a first substep of producing (41) an estimated
14  value Ne of the loudness of the noise present in the
15  returned signal;~ and
16  ——a second substep of noise suppression (42)
17  carried out on the difference signal using said produced
18  estimated value Ne as to produce the modified difference
19  signal D'(t,f);— and
20  ——a step of integrating (32c) the modified
21  difference signal D'(t,f) with respect to frequency and
22  time as to produce the quality signal q.

1   Claim 8 (currently amended): Device for measuring a
2   talking quality of a communication link in a
3   communications network (10), the device comprising
4   measurement means (22; 31, 36) connected to the
5   communication link, the measurement means being arranged
6   to subject a degraded speech signal s'(t) with respect to
7   a reference speech signal s(t) to an objective measurement
8   technique for measuring a perceptual quality of speech
9   signals, and producing a quality signal (q) which
10  represents an estimated value concerning the talking
11  quality degradation;~
12  _____the degraded speech signal comprising a returned
13  signal r(t);~
14  in which the measurement means (22; 31, 36) are arranged
15  to execute the objective measurement technique by
16  modelling masking effects in consequence of noise present
17  in the returned signal in which the objective measurement
18  technique comprises the determination of a threshold noise
19  level by determining a local minimum value of the degraded
20  speech signal s'(t).

Claim 9 (original): Device according to claim 8, in which
the reference speech signal s(t) comprises a silence
period and the measurement means are further arranged to
determine the threshold noise level in the part of the
degraded speech signal s'(t) corresponding to the silence
period in the reference speech signal s(t).

Claim 10 (original): Device according to claim 9, in which
the silence period is provided at the start of the
reference speech signal s(t).

Claim 11 (original): Device according to claim 10, in
which the silence period has a duration of at least
0.5 sec, more preferably at least 0.9 sec.

Claim 12 (original): Device according to claim 8, in which
the measurement means are arranged to estimate the
threshold noise level as local minimum values of
successive parts of the degraded speech signal s'(t).

Claim 13 (original): Device according to claim 8, in which
the measurement means are arranged to estimate the
threshold noise level as the local minimum value of the
degraded speech signal s'(t) in a predefined value range.

Claim 14 (currently amended): Device according to ~~one of the~~
~~claims 8 through 13~~claim 8, in which the device comprises:
        —first processing means (39) for processing the
degraded speech signal s'(t) and generating a first
representation signal R'(t,f), the first representation
signal R'(t,f) being a representation signal of a signal

7    combination of the talker speech signal and the returned

8    signal;

9        —second processing means (38) for processing the

10   talker speech signal s(t) and generating a second

11   representation signal R(t,f);

12       —combining means (32) for combining the first and

13   second representation signals as to produce said output

14   signal q, the combining means including

15          —subtracting means (40) for subtracting the

16   first representation signal from the second representation

17   signal as to produce a difference signal D(t,f);

18          —modelling means (41, 42) for modelling the

19   masking effects carried out on the difference signal as to

20   produce a modified difference signal, including means (41)

21   for producing an estimated value Ne of the loudness of the

22   noise present in the returned signal, and means (42) for

23   carrying out a noise suppression on the difference signal

24   using said produced estimated value Ne, and for producing

25   the modified difference signal D'(t,f); and

26          —integrating means (43) for integrating the

27   modified difference signal with respect to frequency and

28   time as to produce the quality signal q.